

REACH U.S.

Khmer Health Advocates, Inc.

West Hartford, Connecticut

A REACH Center of Excellence in the Elimination of Disparities (CEED)

Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health Across the U.S. (REACH U.S.) is a national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) program aimed at eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities. It utilizes community-based approaches to reduce the burden of chronic illness in specific at-risk populations. There are 18 REACH **Centers of Excellence in the Elimination of Disparities**. They serve as national expert centers implementing, coordinating, refining, and disseminating programmatic activities designed to eliminate health disparities.

ISSUE

The Cambodian Health Network (CHN) is a working coalition of Cambodian organizations from across the U. S. focusing on diabetes mellitus (DM), cardiovascular disease (CVD), and mental health. While the link between stress and cardiovascular disease is well known, Khmer Health Advocates, Inc. (KHA) has documented the link between trauma (post traumatic stress disorder) and the onset of diabetes. They have developed an effective, culturally, and linguistically appropriate education program entitled "Eat, Walk, Sleep for Health." It is being used in the Cambodian-American community to eliminate health disparities in the areas of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and mental health.

ACTIVITIES

- Collects data on social determinants of health, access to care issues, diabetes/CVD and stroke among Cambodian-Americans using a culturally and linguistically appropriate survey tool.
- Promotes best practices in trauma-informed health promotion and care for diabetes and CVD on a local and national level.
- Disseminates culturally and linguistically appropriate health promotion materials and best practices, while enhancing communication between the Cambodian community and healthcare professionals.
- Increases capacity, strengthens knowledge, and provides technical assistance to community-based organizations and health programs to implement evidence-based, culturally appropriate programs, and system changes for diabetes/CVD (including Legacy Projects).
- Identifies current health resources in each geographic community to address current barriers in accessing healthcare services.
- Builds and maintains local, national, and international coalitions to further diabetes/CVD knowledge and promote policy change and advocacy.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Created a national health information warehouse/library at the Cambodian Heritage Museum and Library in Chicago, IL.
- Increased awareness concerning the signs and symptoms of CVD/diabetes, the link between trauma and diabetes/CVD, while strengthening the capacity of Cambodian-American community organizations to address diabetes and cardiovascular disease on a local level.
- Increased resource sharing among CHN members.
- Supported coalition-building and educational efforts that resulted in the expansion of collaborative practice and immunization administration authority for pharmacists in Connecticut.
- Collaborated with the School of Pharmacy at the University of Connecticut to develop a doctoral curriculum that includes integrated trauma-informed health promotion.

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Division of Community Health

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